

thought we had that agreement, the White House did not respond with Congressional Budget Office numbers, and instead came back and said, well, no we have what is called a rosy scenario, we think everything is going to be better. Indeed when you cannot even agree on the parameters, it is very difficult to have negotiations if one side comes to the table with apples and the other side comes to the table with oranges, and you cannot figure out why you cannot have any type of negotiation. I think it is probably because the two sides have come to the table with different measures of what they are talking about.

That is why I think that resolution, the continuing resolution we have voted for, was so important, and I would call on the White House to go back to its agreement and say please live up to your agreement. If you do not like the budget that passed the House and Senate, and that is your option, please submit your own balanced budget using the same estimates. If you do not want any tax cut, take the tax cut out. If you do not want any defense spending, take defense spending out. If you want a lower amount of defense spending, put in a lower amount of defense spending. But please submit your own balanced budget so we can have a comparison and we can actually have legitimate negotiations.

Now a lot of people say, well, the Government shut down at least some departments; is that not the fault of the Congress? Well, the President was sent the appropriations bill for the Interior Department, and he vetoed that. That was his option, but if he had signed it, the Interior Department would be open now. The President would sign the appropriations bill that covered the Veterans Administration. If he had signed that, the VA would be opened now. He choose to veto it. The President was sent the appropriations bill for Housing and Urban Development. He vetoed that bill as well, and HUD remains closed. He was sent the appropriations bill for the Commerce Department. He vetoed that bill, and Commerce is closed. Also with the Department of Justice and the Department of State.

I would call on the President to submit an honest balanced budget so we can balance the budget for our children's future. That is the most important thing we can do.

HOLIDAY SPIRIT IN THE CONGRESS; WHERE IS IT?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I would remind our colleagues in the spirit of Christmas and the observation of Hanukkah there are certain words or feelings that come to us. There are feelings of joy. In fact, the whole religious experience of being a Christian is the advent, is the spirit of expectation, look-

ing forward to something. Also we have feeling of caring and feeling of responsibility, feeling of families and friends. I would just ask you, what joy is there to the more than 250,000 Federal employees who we are holding hostage this Christmas because of our failure to pass budgets? Why should we make them victims of the fight that we have going on? Certainly does not seem to be in the spirit of Christmas, it certainly is not consistent with religious feelings of that.

In terms of responsibility, who is responsible for the situation? One would say that, well, the President is the only one standing between American people and a balanced budget. Truth be known, as far as the shutdown, it is Congress' responsibility. On October 1 we were to have a budget, and we did not have that budget reconciliation. It is our fault because we could not come to that.

What is this debate about?

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What is this debate about? It certainly is not about what the Republicans will say over and over again: "It is about balancing the budget, about balancing the budget in 7 years." It could not be about that because the majority have already agreed upon that.

Why do they repeat that? Simply to confuse or to persuade the American people that the debate is not about real issues, is not about who wins and who loses, it is not about our commitment to compassion, it is not about whether the wealthy succeed at the expense of the poor. It is not about our lack of commitment or commitment to the environment or education. They would rather have you think of this principle that they are willing to die on the sword for and say, "We promise, now, and we are going to keep our promise, come hell or high water."

What they are saying to you, Americans, is that "We will allow you to die on the sword. So we get our provision, or what we perceive to be, we are willing to allow 250,000 employees to have no Christmas." That is what they are saying. They are not standing up for principle. They are saying, "It is my way or no way." No compassion in that position, and certainly nothing to be lofty about.

This whole idea that a balanced budget is sacrosanct escapes me. A balanced budget is because it makes sense to balance the budget, but we balance the budget how? I was told if I want to make a good living, I want to be honorable. I can make a living several ways, but I would rather do it in an honest way. It is as important how we balance the budget as to balance the budget.

It is important in my sight if those Americans who are senior citizens have the opportunity at the end of their lives to make sure that they are not frustrated and in pain because of lack of health care. It is important in my life to think that I would like to prepare for the future, and the future

means we want to invest in education. I hear my colleagues get up and say, "You know, I want my grandkids to grow up in a society where they do not have to pay all of this debt."

I have three grandkids too. I want my three grandkids to grow up so they do not have to pay for a lot of debt, too, but I also want my grandkids and other peoples' grandkids—I happen to be privileged, and have been not because I came to Congress, but because I just happened to be, but I know there are those who are not. America is not just great because of its defense, its technology. America is also great because it makes a place for those who are least among us. We are also great because we have a sense of compassion.

I would say to you, I do not know a better time to show compassion other than in the Christmas season. Surely, there is no compassion in closing down Government. Veterans may not get their checks, welfare mothers may not get their checks. Surely there isn't any compassion with those Federal workers who will not know whether, indeed, they will be paid.

I think, Mr. Speaker, our colleagues need to know the spirit of Christmas is the spirit of joy, caring, and responsibility. We have been ill responsible, and I certainly know we have not been compassionate.

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING, AND THE DIFFICULTY IN MAKING TOUGH BUDGET DECISIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is a season to be very conscious of giving and what we can do for other people. It seems to me that the President and some of the Democrats feel they are gaining politically by calling Republicans mean-spirited in their efforts to whether we are going to reduce the growth of Government and end up with a balanced budget. It is easy for the President, I think, and some of the Democrats to say they want a balanced budget, but it is hard to come up with the specific cuts and reductions in growth that are necessary to achieve that balanced budget.

If we are going to give a present, it seems very, very important that we start considering the tremendous obligations that we are putting on our kids and our grandkids by spending the money today to satisfy what we consider our today's problems with money they have not even earned yet, so we are obligating them to pay our today's bills. I think all of us, collectively, must believe that their problems are going to be as difficult and as great as our problems today, if not greater.

It seems to me that there are two things that are going to have to happen before we can break this budget impasse: First, the President is going to